

LEE MONUMENT

SPEECH

OF

HON. EDWARD W. POU

OF NORTH CAROLINA

IN THE

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Mr. POU. Mr. Speaker, on yesterday the ground was broken to begin the work of the erection of a monument in honor of the Nation's martyred President, Abraham Lincoln. In reading an account of the exercises in the morning paper I was struck with some remarks made by one of the members of the commission which has that work in charge. This gentleman, a former Senator, a southern man and a Confederate soldier, alluded to Mr. Lincoln as the greatest of all American Presidents, and I could not help thinking how fine it is to hear such words from a southern man and a Confederate soldier. [Applause.]

Another monument, Mr. Speaker, is being erected at the base of Capitol Hill in honor of the memory of that great man, the soldier, Ulysses S. Grant. It is well that we should pay tribute to the memory of these men in this way, for a land without monuments is a land without memories.

Mr. Speaker, sometimes I think how vain are many of the things we do here—how soon they are forgotten. We see the flag flying at half-mast and then we ask ourselves who will be next. Shall it be I or shall it be you? Who can tell? Surely no one; but this we do know: The only things that are worth while, the only things which will endure, are not selfish, narrow, or partisan things, but the big, broad, noble thoughts which find expression in our acts. [Applause.]

Mr. Lincoln's Gettysburg speech was an inspiration. I verily believe when those words were born in his great soul Abraham Lincoln was very close to his God. So it was with Ulysses S. Grant when, surveying this Nation wet with blood and tears, he uttered those immortal words, "Let us have peace." So it is, Mr. Speaker, with every man when he does any really great thing. It must be in a moment when his soul is yearning to be a little nearer to God. [Applause.] We fight here for party advantage. You Republicans put us in a hole, so to speak, one day. We try to find an opportunity to pay you back on

to-morrow in the same kind of coin. [Laughter.] These partisan battles are soon forgotten. The things a man does which are remembered are the big, broad, patriotic things, done in the moment when party strife is forgotten. [Applause.]

But, Mr. Speaker, I did not rise to moralize. I asked permission of the House for a few moments to make a practical suggestion. Yes, the ground was broken yesterday to lay the base of the great Lincoln memorial. The Grant Monument at the base of Capitol Hill will, I trust, soon be completed. Now, as Americans, thankful to Almighty God for the greatness of this Nation, feeling in our hearts charity for all and malice toward none, can we not well afford to pass a bill appropriating from the Treasury of all the people a sum sufficient to erect a similar monument to the memory of another man equally as great as Lincoln or Grant? When you recall those four years of blood and tears, what are the names of the men who always appear? Lincoln, Grant, and Lee. [Applause.] Yes, these three names are flashed upon the canvas whenever you recall the sad drama which had its beginning at Sumter and its ending at Appomattox. Whatever may be your opinion of the wisdom of the part any one of these men performed, upon this point we all agree—we reverently thank God that this is a united Nation; that each one of these men did his duty as the good God gave him light to see; that they were all great because they were good; that in this respect each is deserving of the greatest monument human skill can build. [Applause.]

In the last Congress, Mr. Speaker, I introduced a bill appropriating money to erect a monument to Gen. Lee just across Pennsylvania Avenue from the monument now being erected to the memory of Gen. Grant. I have not introduced that bill in this Congress because I cherished the hope it would be introduced and pressed by some gentleman on the other side of the aisle.

Oh, Mr. Speaker, what a splendid hour it would be if we would on the next suspension day pass such a bill without a dissenting voice. [Applause.]

We of the South are glad to see the Grant monument rise. We shall be glad to see the work on the Lincoln monument

rapidly progress. We love the flag. Our manhood is always ready to fight for the flag. If I remember correctly, we furnished 35 per cent of the Army in the War for Independence, 52 per cent in the War of 1812, 65 per cent in the War with Mexico, while in the War with Spain we offered all the Nation would accept. Many of our young men offered their services, but were not accepted, because the quota allotted to the respective States was full.

Let us pause here for a moment. Go with me to the *Winslow's* shattered deck. Go with me to Santiago's burning heights. What beautiful boy lies here; what manly officer is this? Speak, silent lips, and tell us which one of the sister States did yield ye up, a sacrifice for thy country's honor? No answer comes from the dead, but we, the living, are proud to tell the world that one of the States of the South—the State which in part I have the honor to represent; the same State which was first at Bethel and last at Appomattox; also in defense of the flag of a nation forever united was first at Cardenas and last at Santiago. [Applause.]

If an echo could come from the grave of Abraham Lincoln, what think you the martyred President would say? Do you doubt for one moment it would be in approval of the suggestion to honor Lee, just as we are proposing to honor Grant?

If some message could come to us from the tomb of Gen. Grant, do you doubt for one moment what that message would be? If the Grand Army of the Republic were called upon to vote "aye" or "no" upon such a bill, I do honestly believe it would overwhelmingly pass. I may be mistaken in expressing this opinion, but I do not believe I am.

Let these three monuments be erected here in Washington. Let them stand forever to tell the world in eloquent silence that there is truly no North nor South nor East nor West; that each and every State is equal in degree in loyalty to the flag; that deep in our hearts we all believe that whatever is ordained of God is for the best; that it is His providence that this Government of the people and for the people and by the people shall not perish from the earth. [Loud applause.]